

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Financial Services Team
WISCONSIN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT AUDIT MANUAL

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GUARANTEE IN EDUCATION AID

255.504

I. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objective of the SAGE program is to improve student achievement through the implementation of four school improvement strategies: class sizes no more than 15:1 in grades K-3; increased collaboration between schools and their communities; implementation of a rigorous curriculum focusing on academic achievement; and improving professional development and staff evaluation practices.

II. PROGRAM PROCEDURES

SAGE aid is determined pursuant to a contractual agreement between school districts and DPI. School districts participating in the program have 5 year contracts with the State and receive aid equal to \$2,000 for each low-income child in the grades served by the program.

III. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS AND SUGGESTED AUDIT PROCEDURES

A. TYPES OF SERVICES ALLOWED AND UNALLOWED

Compliance requirement

Each participating school must reduce class size to 15 in grades K-3 for regular classroom teachers. Regular classroom teachers are teachers with licenses to teach in the grades covered by the SAGE program whose regular assignment is one of those grades. For the purposes of this determination, teachers whose primary assignments are art, music, physical education, or special education are not considered regular classroom teachers. Interns present in a SAGE classroom cannot be used to help maintain the SAGE class size requirements.

Suggested Audit Procedures

Review district records and procedures for determining whether class sizes are consistent with SAGE guidelines. Generally, classrooms must not include more

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than 15 students as of the third-Friday count date. Review class attendance lists for K-3 classrooms on the third-Friday count date to ensure compliance.

Obtain a printout of salaries/benefits paid using SAGE funds for purposes of determining SAGE teachers. Test teachers charged to SAGE program to determine that they hold the proper license. Only salaries/benefits for properly licensed teachers may be paid using SAGE funds.

Compliance requirement

The Statutes (s.118.43(3)(b)) require the board of each participating school to “keep the school open every day from early in the morning until late in the day, as specified in the contract” and to “collaborate with community organizations to make educational and recreational opportunities, as well as a variety of community and social services, available in the school to all school district residents.”

Suggested Audit Procedures

School building hours should be specified in the SAGE contract. Review the district’s compliance with its approved building hours.

Review the SAGE contract to determine the community activities or services that the participating schools have planned to provide and determine compliance or progress towards providing those services.

Compliance requirement

SAGE funds can be used only for purposes of fulfilling their contract with the State. Costs consistent with this goal can include teacher salary and benefit costs for SAGE regular classroom teachers, professional development for SAGE teachers, costs incurred in connection with community related activities as outlined in the SAGE contract, costs incurred in connection with before and after-school programs outlined in the SAGE contract, costs incurred in modifications of the SAGE classroom curriculum.

Suggested Audit Procedures

Test a sample of costs charged to the SAGE program and determine that they are consistent with the district’s SAGE contract.

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B. ELIGIBILITY

Compliance requirement

School districts entering into a SAGE contract beginning before the 2000-01 school year must have enrollment for the prior year that was at least 50% low-income. School districts first entering into a SAGE contract effective beginning in the 2000-01 school year are not subject to this requirement.

Suggested Audit Procedures

Determine the school district's first year of participation into the SAGE program by obtaining a copy of their signed contract. For those districts that first participated before the 2000-01 school year test eligibility for the district by reviewing their methodology for determining their district's low-income status (generally eligibility for free/reduced lunches is used for poverty measure). For individual school sites participating, test a sample of students to determine they meet the low income definition. For districts participating for the 2000-01 year and thereafter, there is no income level requirement and, therefore, no audit procedures necessary.